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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): We are gratified to see you, Sir, presiding over the First Committee, which deals with items of vital importance to all peoples. We shall draw on your diplomatic ability and tact, and we offer you our full support in the discharge of your duties. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Committee.

Last fall, there emerged a new tone in the general debate in plenary. This year, despite new crises, that encouraging trend has been confirmed. Moreover, after several years of reticence, some countries are turning more often today towards the mechanisms provided in the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. We hope that this renewed enthusiasm for the United Nations will translate into concrete results, both in the First Committee and in the Conference on Disarmament. We should therefore strive to concentrate on the two or three items on our heavy agenda that are of especial importance.

What are those priority questions? One is the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and, above all, a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, as well as nuclear disarmament. The prompt conclusion of a convention on elimination of chemical weapons is another priority. Those are the items on which we should intensify our work.

Before reviewing certain developments in those fields, I should like to recall parenthetically how the agenda of the First Committee evolved.

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In 1960, when the Organization had fewer than 100 Member States, there were 95 items on the General Assembly's agenda. Of the 11 items assigned to this Committee which dealt with political and security questions, including the regulation of armaments, only 4 dealt with disarmament matters and 4 resolutions were adopted. Today, we are 160 Members and there are more than 150 items on the General Assembly's agenda. Some 22 are assigned to this Committee and, of those, 19 are related to disarmament. Last year we adopted some 57 resolutions on disarmament questions. This number is too high and represents 14 times the number of resolutions adopted in 1960. All of us have contributed to this inflation which, we should note in passing, has begun to decrease after reaching almost 30 items and 70 resolutions in the middle of the past decade. All of us, I repeat, have contributed to this inflation and it is up to all of us to reduce it.

At the beginning of the 1960s we concentrated on the "urgent necessity" to suspend nuclear testing, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament, as well as on the establishment of what became the predecessor of the Conference on Disarmament. Perhaps it is impossible to return to an agenda as small as that one, but we should certainly try to refine the list of items assigned to us now.

The question of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty has been on the General Assembly's agenda since 1954, and today we continue to assign to it the highest priority. This year, 1990, there were several important developments in this field.

First, from 29 May to 8 June a meeting was held here in New York for the organization of the amendment Conference on the partial test-ban Treaty. The Conference will take place from 7 to 18 January 1991 to consider an amendment aimed

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at converting it into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. This initiative has gained broad support among the States Parties to the 1963 Moscow Treaty and is evidence of the international community's growing impatience with regard to this item. We appeal to all members of the First Committee, and therefore to all Members of the United Nations, to contribute to the success of the Conference.

A second development was that, after five years of fruitless efforts, the Conference on Disarmament managed to establish - or rather re-establish - the Ad Hoc Committee that is to consider item 1 of its agenda, regarding the nuclear-test ban. That step, however, was neither easy nor very satisfactory. We know - and we know this because this is what the General Assembly votes indicate - that except for a small group of States, the international community wishes to put an end, once and for all, to all testing. But, since that group includes two nuclear-weapon States, which today have another approach, the Ad Hoc Committee's mandate had to be very modest. It was requested merely:

> "to initiate, as a first step towards achieving a nuclear test ban treaty, substantive work on specific and interrelated test ban issues, including structure and scope, as well as verification and compliance." (A/45/27, para. 29, quoting CD/1035, para. 1)

Twenty-seven years after the Moscow Treaty, and 20 years since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating body, has re-established its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban and requested it "to initiate ... substantive work on specific issues". That occurred towards the middle of last July, that is to say a few weeks before the end of the Conference. We hope that in January of 1991 the Ad Hoc Committee will start work immediately, and with a

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mandate more in line with the priority which the international community attaches to this item.

Ten years ago, the Secretary-General, in his report of 24 March 1980 on a comprehensive test ban, prepared by the Secretariat with the assistance of consultant experts, stated:

> "No other question in the field of disarmament has been the subject of so much international concern, discussion, study and negotiation as that of stopping nuclear-weapon tests." (CD/86, para. 1)

In the report the Secretary-General reached the following conclusion:

> "A main objective of all efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament has been to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race, to stop the production of nuclear weapons and to achieve their eventual elimination.
>
> "In this connexion, a comprehensive test ban is regarded as the first and most urgent step towards a cessation of the nuclear-arms race, in particular, as regards its qualitative aspects." (CD/86, paras. 151-152)

In the report, the Secretary-General recalled that the question of a comprehensive test ban

> "was one of the issues raised in connexion with the negotiations for the non-proliferation Treaty". (CD/86, para. 52)

And he stated that the question arose:

> "because of the demands of the non-nuclear-weapon States that the nuclear Powers must provide some binding undertakings to make rapid substantial progress towards nuclear disarmament. A resolution of that question was regarded as one of the necessary elements of an acceptable balance of the mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States". (ibid.)

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What is more, the history of the non-proliferation Treaty negotiations demonstrates that there is a close link between the provisions of its article VI - cessation of the nuclear-arms race and the achievement of a comprehensive test ban - and those of article X, which deals with the limited duration of the Treaty. Hence, the importance of beginning at once the preparation of the 1995 Conference regarding the extension of the non-proliferation Treaty. And this brings us to the third important development in 1990 regarding the comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

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The Fourth Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was held in Geneva from 20 August to 14 September this year. The Government of Mexico believes that the Conference held the most in-depth debate and thorough review of the Treaty's operation that has ever taken place. This, in itself, is an indication of the Conference's success. Many important questions were clarified, and some understandings were reached which will find their place in other forums, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the First Committee. I have in mind full-scope safeguards and security guarantees. Moreover, we identified those areas of the Treaty's operation with which States parties are satisfied and others where there is growing non-compliance. The latter is especially true with regard to the question of the fulfilment of the obligations under article VI of the Treaty, including a comprehensive test ban.

This year we have before us a "Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons", in document A/45/373, whose conclusions were adopted unanimously by the Group of qualified experts appointed by the Secretary-General. This document updates the 1980 study, in document A/35/392. Our appreciation goes to Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin of Sweden, who chaired the Group. In the report it is stated inter alia that

> "Most countries in the world consider that an early end to nuclear testing by all States in all environments would be an essential step towards preventing the qualitative improvement and the development of new nuclear weapons and would also contribute to the goal of non-proliferation. Most nuclear-weapon States consider that their reliance on nuclear weapons for their security requires their continued testing and do not agree that a comprehensive test ban is an urgent necessity." (A/45/373, para. 523)

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Unfortunately, the experts were unable to agree on a series of conclusions stressing more categoricalally the urgent necessity of putting an end to the nuclear-arms race. Moreover, a reading of the study in its entirety leaves us with the impression that there is too much emphasis on the dangers of a horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, a rather hypothetical proliferation, and much confusion regarding the dangers of vertical proliferation, which is not hypothetical at all.

Ten years ago, in the first "Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons", in document A/35/392, which the qualified experts appointed by the Secretary-General submitted unanimously to the General Assembly, stress was placed on a comprehensive test ban's fundamental importance for the cessation of the nuclear-arms race. In that study we also read:

> "Moreover, there is also the undeniable role of the so-called military industrial complex, which obviously stands to benefit from the continuation and escalation of the arms race. It is imperative that the political leaders of the world control these forces rather than be controlled by them and thereby assume their responsibility for seeking increased international security at lower levels of armaments and through the eventual establishment of a security system that does not rely on the use or threat of the use of force." (A/35/392, para.503)

The report concluded as follows:

> "Even if the road to nuclear disarmament is a long and difficult one, there is no alternative. Peace requires the prevention of the danger of a nuclear war. If nuclear disarmament is to become a reality, the commitment to mutual deterrence through a balance of terror must be discarded. The concept of the maintenance of world peace, stability and balance through the process of deterrence is perhaps the most dangerous collective fallacy that exists ...

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"So long as reliance continues to be placed upon the concept of the balance of nuclear deterrence as a method for maintaining peace, the prospects for the future will always remain dark, menacing and as uncertain as the fragile assumptions upon which they are based. Fortunately this is not the only alternative that is available to mankind. We have, in the United Nations, an institution which should be utilized for all the purposes and stages that are relevant to the process of disarmament - negotiation, agreement, implementation, verification and ratification where necessary". (ibid, paras. 519 and 520)

That is precisely the role we should like the United Nations to be playing, a more and more central one in the sphere of disarmament.

This year the Secretary-General has submitted another report - in document A/45/372 - which deals with the role of the United Nations in the field of verification and was prepared with the assistance of a group of experts appointed by him. The group carried out an analysis of the fundamental aspects of the verification of disarmament agreements and of United Nations activities in this area, as well as possible improvements in these activities. It also identified some possible additional activities. Though its conclusions and recommendations are very modest, the report is useful as a point of departure for placing the United Nations in a position to enhance - in quantity and in quality - its role in this field.

The rapid changes registered in Europe over the past year have transformed the political and military structure of the post-war period. We hope that these changes will soon have an impact also on the European military situation, in the conventional as well as in the nuclear arms field. A few days ago the United States and the Soviet Union reached an agreement on measures for a substantial reduction of conventional armaments in Europe. Let us hope that this important

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step will be followed by others of similar significance in the field of nuclear disarmament and in other priority disarmament questions.

The changes in Europe will also affect the way in which we have been working at the United Nations - in the so-called regional groups - and, in particular, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. For 30 years we have been organizing our work on the basis of five regional groups. We shall certainly have to adjust the membership of those groupings to the new political and military realities. For example, the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament is made up of non-aligned and neutral countries; but in 1990 one should ask: non-aligned and neutral vis-à-vis whom?

For several years the question of the enlargement of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament has been considered. At present it has 40 members, and it is proposed that there be an increase in the number to 44 and that such an increase be made so as to maintain "the balance in the membership of the Conference". Mention is made of two States of the Group of 21, one for the Group of Western European and Other States, and another for the Group of Eastern European States. The unification of Germany on 3 October last presents us with an additional variant: the need to fill a vacancy. The delegation of Mexico considers that this should be examined independently of the question of the enlargement of the membership of the Conference. Therefore we are willing to consider this matter with the other members of the Conference and members of the First Committee in order to reach agreement on how that vacancy should be filled.

During 1990 the Conference on Disarmament held a series of informal consultations on the way to improve its functioning and make it more effective. Ably conducted by Ambassador Ahmad Kamal of Pakistan, they produced a first and

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very modest result regarding the calendar of the Conference's annual sessions and the simplification of its programme of work. We hope that in 1991, when this question is again taken up, the members of the Conference will give clear proof of political will in dealing with the substantive items on its agenda. That will be the best way to enhance the Conference's effectiveness.

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The report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly (A/45/27) is, as in past years, a voluminous document. There are some 370 single-spaced pages in its Spanish version. Its size is in inverse proportion to the Conference's results in 1990. With the exception of chemical weapons there is in fact nothing to report to the General Assembly. Once again the section on chemical weapons accounts for 70 per cent of the report of the Conference on Disarmament. That is an accurate reflection of the intensity of the work on this important question. Under the tenacious guidance of Ambassador Carl Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden, the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, with a negotiating mandate, and its several subsidiary bodies, were in session almost continuously from February to August. In November the Committee will continue its open consultations to prepare for the brief session it will hold from 8 to 18 January 1991.

The way in which work is proceeding in Geneva on a convention regarding the elimination of chemical weapons exemplifies both the virtues and the shortcomings of the multilateral negotiating process on disarmament agreements.

On the one hand, there is a collective and detailed examination of the different questions relating to the future convention. Obstacles are identified and adequate solutions are sought. Besides diplomats and experts from member and non-member countries of the Conference on Disarmament, representatives of the chemical industry participate and contributions are received from a wide range of non-governmental organizations.

On the other, the negotiating process has its ups and downs. This is normal in any multilateral exercise, and unfortunately this year has been no exception. With an important change in its mandate, the Ad Hoc Committee began its work in February with signs that augured well, but it concluded its work in August under a cloud of disagreements, as reflected in the last pages of its report. In part this

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was because it is difficult for some to gauge adequately the true meaning of a multilateral negotiation.

As is known, the United States and the Soviet Union - the only States that have declared they possess chemical arsenals - have been negotiating agreements bilaterally on this matter, independently of the Conference on Disarmament negotiations. Last June, during the Washington summit, they signed an agreement on destruction and non-production of their chemical weapons and on measures to facilitate the multilateral convention banning them. We expect its early entry into force so as to implement the undertaking to cease the production of chemical weapons and to begin the process of their destruction.

They also agreed to submit joint proposals in Geneva with a view to modifying the draft multilateral convention that has been under negotiation for several years. Those proposals resulted in an impasse in the Ad Hoc Committee which was only resolved on the last day of its session through resort to the not very satisfactory method of negotiating extensive footnotes and the status of the documents to be annexed to the report.

Those proposals refer to the provisions on the destruction of chemical weapons. They are aimed at placing conditions on and postponing a decision on the total elimination of chemical weapons, and would give greater rights to States that possess them. If these proposals were accepted there could emerge a sort of juridical limbo with regard to the scope and implementation of the multilateral convention.

The statement made by the Group of 21 on those proposals, which is appended to the Committee's report, notes, among other things, that the multilateral negotiations on a total ban of chemical weapons should not deviate from the principal undertakings in the present draft convention. Moreover, it points out that their destruction should be unconditional and should be decided from the very

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conclusion of the convention so that by the end of the 10-year destruction period all such weapons and their production facilities would be totally eliminated. The statement concluds as follows:

"The Group of 21 opposes any measures which are aimed at establishing a non-proliferation régime in the field of chemical weapons. In its view, non-proliferation in all its aspects can only be achieved through a total and comprehensive ban of chemical weapons." (A/45/27, p. 299.)

My delegation, like all other participants in the Conference on Disarmament negotiations, desires the achievement of universal adherence to the convention on the total ban of chemical weapons. However, one should consider carefully the means to achieve that universality. The objective of universality would best be promoted by the unconditional commitment to destroy all chemical weapons and their means of production, as already provided for in Article I of the draft convention, and unambiguous agreement to provide assistance to States Parties that may be exposed to the use or threat of the use of chemical weapons. In this respect, attempts to transfer the reservations attached by some Governments to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to the Convention under negotiation would defeat this purpose. Moreover, the introduction at this stage in the negotiations of new verification concepts - the scope, the means of implementation and the costs of which are unclear - can only further delay and complicate our task.

The future convention will establish the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to achieve the objectives of the convention, to ensure the implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification of compliance with it, and to provide a multilateral forum for consultation and co-operation among States Parties. It is thus important to ensure the establishment of a close link betweer that organization and the United Nations.

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Before concluding we should like to refer to the item on outer space which, as will be seen, is a natural candidate for inclusion in the list of subjects whose consideration by the General Assembly should be rationalized. On the basis of the report of the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee will examine the "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". This item has been on our agenda since 1981. The Special Political Committee will in parallel consider on the basis of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the item entitled "International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space", which has been on the General Assembly's agenda since 1958.

No one can or should deny that these items complement each other. It would be unthinkable to seek greater co-operation in the exclusive use of outer space for peaceful purposes while there continued to be initiatives aimed at ensuring military supremacy in that environment.

The duplication in the treatment of this item for over 10 years has given rise to a sort of schizophrenia. On the one hand, the Conference on Disarmament, as one can see in its report on the subject, has again ignored the repeated appeals of the General Assembly to undertake negotiations with the aim of concluding an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Ad Hoc Committee on this question, established five years ago, is still in the process of "examining and identifying relevant issues" though as yet it has been impossible to give it a negotiating mandate.

On the other hand, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which has negotiated all the existing multilateral agreements on the subject, has not been capable of considering fully the question of the militarization of outer space since some of its members argue that it can only deal with the promotion of international co-operation in this field.

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In the meantime the international community looks on as two multilateral bodies of limited membership shirk the responsibility of undertaking the urgent task of stopping the arms race in outer space. Ten years from a new millennium, and five from the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, we must all of us redouble our efforts to consolidate a more just and equitable and, above all, a less armed world.

Mr. PIREK (Czechoslovakia): Mr. Chairman, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the office of Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of the readiness of the delegation of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic to work together with you and with all delegations for the achievement of positive results at this session.

I agree with the evaluation made by many previous speakers that the current session of the First Committee, and that of the General Assembly as a whole, is taking place under very special historic conditions. As in the case of the aggressive policy of divide et impera, an end has been put to the balance of terror. The sense of responsibility conceded to the zoon politicon by Aristotle could, therefore, begin to permeate the new, increasingly humanized legal space of the world. The strength of the pervasiveness of this process of recovery is demonstrated by the resolute reaction of the United Nations to the crisis in the Persian Gulf. For the first time in its history, the Security Council has, by its decision, demonstrated the higher principle of the collective responsibility of the international community for the preservation of peace and security in the world. The doctrine based on fear and terror and on the military approach to the security of nations has been outweighed by new all-human certainties - certainties imbued with legality, with humanistic essence and with the noble will of States to prevent armed conflicts by effective measures. Confrontation is being replaced by co-operation and partnership. Security ceases to be the domain of only the strong of the world and former moralizing monologues are taking the shape of partner-like, open and needed useful dialogue.

As the representative of a country located in the heart of Europe, I am proud that it is precisely the nations of Central Europe that have emerged as the effective catalyst of the democratic transformations and of peaceful co-operation. They have renounced military blocs and are merging into an alliance of new eternal

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values. In this context one cannot but emphasize yet another important circumstance.

The consequences of the cold war can be eliminated only through collective efforts and within the framework of a community of democratic States that will guarantee non-militaristic approaches to the preservation of peace. In other words: the emergence of global problems of disarmament makes it inevitable that the historically established system of nation States be supplemented by a new system of broader regional groupings of States fully engaged in mutual peaceful co-operation. The formation of such a system is highly topical, especially in Europe. In fact, the moral and material insecurity arising temporarily in some States could increase into a resurrection of militant "isms" - ethnic feuds and racism, long surpassed by history.

The brutality and arrogance of those who instigated the Gulf crisis have again urgently reminded us that disarmament has now become a categorical imperative of the conduct of all States. Therefore, we place such efforts in the forefront of our foreign policy orientation, which is aimed at the establishment of a new international order. One such effort is based on a relocation of the functions of military blocs to new all-European structures based on a common determination on the part of States even to enforce peace. We are convinced that peace will be like a big river into which more and more rich tributaries are streaming - if mankind is able to make such a provision. And the greater the input, the more powerful and unstoppable will be the peace resolve of States.

In our new foreign policy we attach fundamental importance to conventional disarmament and, as a European country, primarily to its European dimension. We regard the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE) and on confidence-building measures (CBM) in Vienna as being among the keystones of the

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new European structure. We are paying particular attention to them and expect them to produce tangible results.

The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic supports the efforts aimed at completing a treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe by the time the summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) meets in Paris in November. We are doing our utmost to find a mutually acceptable compromise. At a meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Special Commission on Disarmament we prepared specific suggestions for all of the matters still outstanding in the CFE negotiations. At issue are the national levels and ceilings of combat equipment for the individual Warsaw Treaty countries. That is a prerequisite for the adoption of an overall treaty that is to set collective ceilings for the two alliances.

The ministerial meeting, here in New York, of representatives of the 35 CSCE States as well as the outcome of the talks between the United States Secretary of State and the Soviet Foreign Minister have given a new impetus to the negotiations. We are in favour of the convening of one more meeting of ministers for foreign affairs; at it the CFE Treaty should be initialled and a final agreement reached on the modalities for the summit.

My country considers the final document of the Paris summit, entitled "Democratic, peaceful and united Europe", which is currently under preparation, as a paper of crucial significance in that it not only classifies the changes in Europe but also profiles the role, further development and institutionalization of the CSCE process.

Let me now mention some issues of arms control and disarmament, and of international arms transfers, to all of which we are devoting constant attention. We regard them as integral components of the confidence-building process. The Group of Experts studying the role of the United Nations in the field of verification, which included a representative of my country, successfully completed

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its work this year. The Czechoslovak delegation considered the outcome of the Group's work to be good and therefore recommends the study to the First Committee for its approval.

The discontinuation of arms supplies, especially to areas of tension and conflicts, is a new and important part of my country's foreign policy. In the long run, this will be conducive to greater openness and confidence. The result of the work of the Secretary-General's group dealing with this subject - a study to be presented to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session - is, in our opinion, much needed, both in the international context and as a useful point of reference for internal consideration of this topic.

In the recent past, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic has been unilaterally reducing the manpower strength of its armed forces, and also its combat equipment. Far-reaching organizational changes are being carried out in the Czechoslovak army. Defence spending is also being gradually scaled down. In 1989 this amounted to 35.62 Czechoslovak crowns; the sum envisaged for this year is 31.18 billion, which represents a cut of 12.5 per cent. Last April the Federal Government decided to terminate military production in a number of major plants. That simultaneously triggered off some concrete measures in the sphere of conversion from military to civilian industries.

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This process, which involves structural changes in the Czechoslovak economy and affects the field of social welfare, is not an easy one. All this is taking place against the background of a fundamental transition to the principles of a market economy, which is imposing tremendous demands on the country's population and economy. Yet the conversion is necessary and cannot be avoided. The results achieved and the experience gained, whether good or bad, may then serve as a source of knowledge for other countries.

In the newly existing situation, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic has taken a principled stance on the issue of military expenditures. Pursuant to a relevant General Assembly resolution, we have submitted a report on our military expenditures, compiled in accordance with the United Nations standardized system of reporting. Those data were presented also at the negotiations of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Vienna. They reflect in detail the situation in the 1989 fiscal year. Czechoslovakia intends to continue to submit these data and calls upon all other Member States that have not yet done so to subscribe to a similar practice.

As a country situated in Central Europe, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic underscores the importance of regional and subregional initiatives. At the same time, the fact that we are paying attention to regional affairs does not mean we underestimate global problems or the role played by the United Nations in efforts to solve them. In fact, the results of a regional approach to disarmament issues in Europe may have a favourable effect on other multilateral negotiations or show a path to be followed by other regions of the world as well.

As to the global questions of disarmament, we deem it to be necessary to concentrate efforts, first and foremost, on the speedy finalization of the Convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. The relevant

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resolution of the First Committee should therefore include an appeal to conclude the work on the convention next year, and an appeal for the adoption by as many countries as possible of a commitment to become the original parties to the convention. We regard the successful finalization of the convention as proof of countries' readiness to embark upon the road of strengthening world stability.

With a view to helping enhance the atmosphere of trust and to speeding up those negotiations, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic made public this year detailed data on its own peacetime chemical potential and tested, experimentally, the usefulness and feasibility of the proposed challenge inspections. A few days ago my country withdrew its reservation to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, thus committing itself to abide by it unconditionally.

We are convinced that conditions have grown ripe also for accelerating the process of nuclear disarmament, which was set in motion by the Soviet-United States Treaty on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. The pronouncements made at the Soviet-United States summit in Washington, the proposals contained in the London Declaration of the States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and, last but not least, the deliberations at the recently concluded Fourth Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons confirm this fact. Even the absence of a final document does not detract from the significance of the Conference. It thoroughly reviewed the implementation of all articles and provisions of the Treaty. It helped to clarify the positions in the field or, possibly, some aspects, of nuclear disarmament. The discussion there indicated a very close convergence of views on co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, on the evaluation of the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Agency's safeguards system, and on the need for consistent verification of compliance with the non-proliferation régime.

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The Conference reaffirmed the necessity speedily to open serious negotiations, at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels, on a complete and universal ban on nuclear-weapon tests. To this end, bilateral Soviet-United States talks are of decisive importance as is, from the multilateral point of view, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. As far as the latter is concerned, we appreciate the setting up this year, on the basis of a compromise mandate originally proposed by the Czechoslovak delegation, of a working committee on the issue of a nuclear-weapon-test ban. It is our view that under the relevant resolution of the First Committee the General Assembly should decide that the working committee should continue its activities in 1991. In view of the progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, to which I have already referred, we shall support efforts to reduce the number of resolutions on this topic. Pressure to reach a comprehensive solution to the whole question will be brought to bear, too, by the amendment conference on the partial test-ban Treaty in January 1991, which a Czechoslovak delegation will also attend.

The subject of prevention of a nuclear war is closely related to the issue of military doctrines. This is another area we are following very carefully. We welcome the outcome of the NATO summit in London, in particular the development of the alliance's positions on short-range missiles and on the use of nuclear weapons.

In regard to the issue of preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space, the Czechoslovak delegation at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva wishes to rely on a committee there which would have a clearly defined mandate. That would make it possible to start discussing specific items, such as confidence-building measures in outer space.

The demands for safeguards to prevent the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States were urgently reflected at the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

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of Nuclear Weapons. The Conference on Disarmament should continue intensive discussion of this topic in the spirit of the suggestions that emerged at that forum. Within the framework of the First Committee, we advocate combining the two traditional yet parallel resolutions.

It is encouraging to note an increasing United Nations role in dealing with questions concerning arms control and disarmament - and not only here. Because it is a global organization, the United Nations fully reflects the current broad understanding of international security. The delegation of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic is participating in the endeavours to enhance the comprehensive role of the United Nations and of its system in the field of disarmament. At the same time, however, our eyes are not closed to the need to rationalize many a component of this large machinery.

The general debate in the First Committee should be shorter, more subject-related and more specific. Thus, more time would be spared for an exchange of views on the major outstanding problems of the day. The Czechoslovak delegation is in favour of the adoption of a fewer number of resolutions, given that their content is often very similar, if not identical. We shall seek primarily to achieve resolutions with a practical effect.

The activization of efforts to reorganize the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has come at an opportune time. It is the result not only of sound dialogue, but also of the needs of the present time. However, the approach to the Conference's work should also be changed so that not all but, rather, only some agenda items are considered in one single negotiating round. That would make it possible to concentrate all the potential needed to achieve long-overdue results.

In this context, we welcome the already accomplished rationalization of the

(Mr. Pirek, Czechoslovakia)

work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, in which we have actively participated. This will constitute a basis for next year's work, in accordance with agreed rules. We see it as an example, also, for other forums - with, naturally, due regard being paid to the purpose, meaning and possibilities of each of them.

(Mr. Pirek, Czechoslovakia)

The great philosopher Immanuel Kant has already been quoted numerous times in United Nations forums as a wise man who revealed to the world not only the rationality of peace but also its indispensability. But allow me in conclusion to restate his convictions as a practical humanistic thinker. As early as 200 years ago he was able to understand that a community of democratic States would be able to avoid war if it were able to enforce peace. If only for that reason, we support the setting up of a security structure that would rest on such reasonable guarantees as could be reached gradually in a process of real disarmament.

Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana): Since this is my first statement in the First Committee, let me congratulate you, Sir, and the other Committee officers, on your election to the posts in which you will guide our deliberations. The Ghana delegation will co-operate with you in the discharge of your responsibilities.

The First Committee has begun its work against the background of the encouraging trends in international relations that were already apparent during last year's session of the Committee. That is true despite the regrettable events in the Gulf and pockets of tension in some regions. Changed East-West relations have transformed Europe from a long-standing scene of ideological rivalry and incipient military confrontation into an area of constructive co-operation and the promotion of mutual trust. Our fervent hope is that this laudable détente will be used to serve the interests of all nations big and small.

Two years ago the international focus was on the Treaty on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles - the INF Treaty. Today the aspirations are much greater. In Malta at the beginning of the year and in Washington last June the super-Powers held out the promise of a whole range of disarmament agreements in 1990. Equally encouraging was the significant progress announced a fortnight ago on the

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

conventional-arms-reduction talks going on in Vienna, indicating that arms control has caught up with the important political changes sweeping Europe.

In other regions we have seen manifest the will of the international community to settle conflicts through peaceful dialogue. These encouraging developments are beginning to have a significant impact on arms control and disarmament.

However reassuring these developments are, they have not changed the sombre realities facing us all. The world is still threatened by the massive stocks contained in nuclear arsenals. Even after a treaty under the strategic arms reduction talks (START), there will be over 35,000 operational nuclear warheads in the world.

This is therefore not a time for complacency. It is rather a time for redoubled efforts which would take advantage of the ongoing developments. This Committee, therefore, has no choice but to improve upon its performance of last year. The conclusions of its deliberations, in our view, should be seen to move the disarmament process forward, even if only by a modest step. The Ghana delegation will, as in the past, co-operate with like-minded delegations in the achievement of this objective.

A nuclear-test ban remains an intractable problem. Ghana attaches great importance to the early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We believe that is the most practical way of halting and de-escalating the nuclear-arms race because testing constitutes the further development of nuclear arms. We therefore welcome the re-establishment by the Conference on Disarmament, during its July 1990 session, of the Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear testing. The re-establishment of that Committee offers a long awaited opportunity to focus attention on the important item of nuclear-weapon testing. We note that the

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

Committee has agreed to resume substantive work during the 1991 session. My delegation would like to hope that the resumed work will focus on central issues and will proceed to a meaningful exchange of views on a test ban.

We cannot help but register profound regret over the failure of the review Conference of parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty last month to reach consensus on a final document, primarily because of differences over nuclear-weapon testing. Although we welcome the progress on the important issues of full-scope safeguards, security assurances and the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities, the failure to agree on the crucial issue of a test ban clearly shows that much still remains to be done. We urge the depositary States which claim they support general and complete disarmament to demonstrate their sincerity by changing their position on the issue of nuclear testing.

To be effective, a test ban, in our view, must be comprehensive and should cover all environments and systems including so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. The increasing waves of weapons testing - a total of 27 instances as estimated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) for the year 1989 alone - are incompatible with claims to a sincere commitment to general and complete disarmament, even if the number of nuclear explosions in 1989 was significantly lower than the total of 40 recorded in 1988. The ongoing bilateral initiatives by the super-Powers do not preclude the modernization of their weapon systems and therefore cannot, in our view, contribute to the cessation of the qualitative development of their nuclear capabilities and systems. With Germany united, with the new thinking on the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, and with Eastern European States edging into a more Western orbit, how much relevance can one attach to the theory of so-called deterrence?

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

Nor is verification any longer an issue, as some have always claimed it to be. There is a consensus within the scientific community that nuclear explosions can be detected through the available network of high-performance seismic stations, space observatories and satellite detecting stations. Besides, the United States-USSR joint verification experiment provides ample examples of the willingness of the two super-Powers to allow highly intrusive on-site inspections to verify agreements on nuclear testing.

The credible scientific view also has it that a test ban would not render existing nuclear weapons unreliable. According to an article published by the Washington-based Center for Defense Information in the April 1989 issue of The Defense Monitor, eight renowned nuclear-weapon experts, including Morris Bradbury, former Director of the Los Alamos National Laboratories, told the United States Congress in 1985 that continued nuclear testing was not necessary to ensure the reliability of existing nuclear-weapons stockpiles. The best way way to confirm reliability, Bradbury stated, was to disassemble sample weapons and subject the components to non-nuclear tests.

We urge those who have been using the argument of verification capabilities and stockpile reliability to block progress on a nuclear-test ban to initiate appropriate action to end nuclear testing, thereby creating conditions for final, credible and real nuclear disarmament.

It is the view of my delegation that the issue of conventional disarmament and the international transfer of arms should receive no less attention in this debate. In this connection, the Ghana delegation welcomed the report a fortnight ago that an accord had been reached in principle on conventional arms in Europe.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

It is our hope that the emerging accord will serve to strengthen the new political order in Europe through the elimination of excess weapons and will thus put an end to over four decades of division and mistrust in that part of the world. We also hope the accord will be ready for signature at the planned Paris summit next month.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

Arms transfer has become a disturbing phenomenon which must be addressed. The tragic events in the Gulf with their destabilizing global effects are partly the result of unrestricted transfer of arms to an already volatile region. In their anxiety to exploit the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, some Member States, regrettably, became reckless in the effort to help their national businesses make money. The events in the Gulf should therefore offer sobering reflections on the unbridled transfer of arms, particularly to regions of conflict.

It is also our view that the benefit of the emerging accord on conventional arms reduction in Europe would be neutralized if the surplus arms made available by the proposed legal limits were either sold or transferred to so-called allies in the developing countries. We therefore appeal to those planning to dispose of their surplus weapons in this manner to reconsider their position in the interest of strengthening the disarmament process. The tendency to make maximum profits, even from those disposable weapons, under this laudable accord should be scrupulously avoided if already sensitive regional issues are not to explode into ugly armed conflicts.

The Ghana delegation will again support any draft resolution intended to curb the emerging phenomenon of arms transfer. It remains our view, however, that a realistic approach to the problem lies in greater attention to conflict-resolution, strict adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of others, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of mutual trust.

My delegation has noted in the report by the Conference on Disarmament on a chemical-weapons convention that a number of differences still remain to be bridged before the elaboration of the draft convention. We had thought the conclusion of the draft was within our reach, given the enormous interest expressed in the treaty negotiations. We would urge greater flexibility and compromise to bridge the existing differences on the draft text.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

In his statement on 25 September in the General Assembly, the leader of our delegation welcomed the Bush-Gorbachev agreement at their recent Washington Summit on the non-production of chemical weapons, and the destruction of the bulk of their chemical-weapons stockpiles before the conclusion of the chemical-weapons convention. However, the decision to keep residual stockpiles until all chemical-weapon-capable States adhere to the convention would not, in our view, help the course of the negotiations.

Among the major issues that deserve urgent attention, now that the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is entering the final stages of the negotiations, is a convention that is universal and comprehensive. Universality would demand that all States cease the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons; it would include the termination of all modernization programmes and of the residual retention of existing stocks. Anything short of this approach would, in our view, undermine what could otherwise be a major accomplishment in arms control and disarmament. Our objective should be to improve upon the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Ghana continues to support the peaceful use of outer space, and therefore remains opposed to the extension of any military competition or activity into outer space. Our stand has always been in conformity with United Nations resolutions which have affirmed that outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is the common heritage of mankind and must therefore be preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes in the interest of all nations. My delegation will therefore, as in the past, support all measures that would halt the development of space weapons, including anti-satellite weapons, as well as a workable and effective mutually agreed programme that will ban space weapons.

Ghana has supported and continues to support the concept of nuclear-free zones, because such zones have the potential for strengthening nuclear

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

non-proliferation. It is therefore a matter of deep regret that Africa's desire to remain nuclear-free continues to be thwarted by the racist régime of South Africa. The continued nuclear activities of South Africa and its allies on the continent, including the testing of nuclear arms, has seriously undermined the wishes of Africa. It is regretted that the Secretary-General's final report under resolution 44/113 B of 15 December 1989 is not ready for our study as we take the floor. We hope that what finally comes out will clarify the position on the allegations that collaboration between a member State and South Africa has resulted in the development by South Africa of a nuclear-tipped missile.

In order further to strengthen the ongoing talks on the future of South Africa, we urge the South African Government to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty without any pre-conditions. We also call upon other countries which have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty. Universal accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is vital for the attainment of general and complete disarmament.

We are happy that the Disarmament Commission succeeded during its session last spring in reaching consensus agreement on a number of its old agenda items. We look forward to the adoption of shorter agenda items, which should include items on which agreement could be reached. Long and over-ambitious agenda items, in our view, can and should be avoided.

We also welcome the practical proposals made by you, Mr. Chairman, during the informal exchange of views last week, on further rationalization of the work of the First Committee. My delegation will co-operate with you and with other like-minded delegations to ensure a more business-like approach to our work. We need to avoid repetitive and, at times, counterproductive approaches which make the work of the Committee unnecessarily long and cumbersome.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

Finally, arms control and disarmament continue to be among the major concerns of the international community. This is demonstrated by the large number of resolutions the General Assembly adopts every year on disarmament issues alone. With the improved international climate, an opportunity now exists for addressing with positive hope disarmament issues which a few years ago would have appeared intractable. For the attainment of the General Assembly's objective of general and complete disarmament, however, tangible progress needs to be made on all aspects of disarmament. This implies greater flexibility and commitment, particularly with regard to the resolution of conflicts through peaceful negotiations.

We also hope that the developing climate ushered in by disarmament will enable all of us, small and big nations, to avoid the temptation of clandestinely acquiring arms. This will defeat the entire international effort.

The different positions expressed already in the current debate point to the challenging tasks before this Committee. The Ghana delegation hopes the First Committee will again prove equal to its daunting task by increasing the number of consensus resolutions it submits to the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has just heard the last speaker on the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before doing so I should like to remind representatives that the Committee will follow the procedure outlined at the previous meeting.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): I wish to speak in exercise of our right of reply, in order to answer remarks made here yesterday by the representative of Iraq.

The First Committee is not the proper place for the detailed consideration of the Gulf crisis initiated by Iraq's brutal invasion of Kuwait. However, it is

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

certainly appropriate to take note of Iraq's unwarranted use of military force against its smaller neighbour. Such aggression is a reminder of the vital importance of our work. In this regard, Iraq's abuses of its international obligations have been pointed out repeatedly since the beginning of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Virtually every speaker here in the First Committee has noted these violations. It is clear that Iraq stands isolated.

I shall not comment on the specific remarks made by the representative of Iraq yesterday afternoon. I would simply point out that we in this Committee are working to build a safer and more secure world, a world in which differences will not be addressed by force. As Ambassador Pickering said in the general debate in the General Assembly, actions such as those carried out since 2 August by Iraq in the Gulf represent a relic from a violent past, a past we hope to leave behind us. Those actions profoundly threaten the kind of world order we are working to achieve.

Mr. MALIK (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): The representative of the United States should be the last person to speak of international order, international law or international security. His country has the worst track record in the world when it comes to violating international law and order and trampling upon international norms. Has the representative of the United States forgotten his country's invasions of Grenada and Panama? Or is he naive enough to believe that he can deceive this gathering of representatives with his claims?

That is all I have to say.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Mr. Kheradi, Secretary of the Committee, who has some announcements to make pertaining to documentation.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/45/INF/1, which lists the documents before the First Committee at the current session.

It should be noted that that document includes references only to documents that were issued as of 12 October. Accordingly, the updated version to be issued shortly will list additional documents, including certain reports of the Secretary-General that have been issued since that date.

In that context, I would also wish to assure delegations that, despite various constraints related to the processing of documentation as it moves from the stage of substantive preparation to the stage of technical production and issuance, every possible effort is being made by the Secretariat to bring out the remaining documents, including the one referred to by the representative of Ghana, as expeditiously as possible.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
8th meeting
held on
Thursday, 18 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. RASAPUTRAM (Sri Lanka): I wish to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your election to your office at this time when your duties may be very demanding. You represent a country with which Sri Lanka has always had friendly relations. We wish to pledge our fullest support and co-operation to you and the other officers of the Committee in all your endeavours.

The depth of the analysis and comment made in statements in plenary meetings at this session of the General Assembly is indicative of the far-reaching nature of the changes that have taken place in the world in the recent past. We have experienced the freeing of international relations from the shackles of cold-war politics. We have seen tangible steps being taken to arrest the process of over-arming, both nuclear and conventional, in the most heavily armed continent, in which two devastating world wars originated. We have also witnessed the coming to the fore of non-military dimensions of security such as poverty, deprivation, environmental degradation and socio-economic instabilities that pervade the less affluent parts of the world. The United Nations has been enabled to play an increasing and positive role in discharging its responsibilities of peace-making and peace-keeping. At the same time, however, there have been negative developments affecting various parts of the globe where tensions, the use of force and the undermining of the rule of law in the conduct of inter-State relations continue to be sources of concern.

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

In this situation of change, whether positive or negative, the United Nations and its multilateral mechanisms have provided a degree of stability and continuity to the international order. As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report,

"The United Nations, therefore, enters the post-cold war era as a central point of constancy in the midst of flux". (A/45/1, p. 2)

Evidently the positive and negative developments of the recent past have emphasized the self-evident reality that States should return to the code of conduct espoused by the founders of the United Nations. We need a greater and deeper commitment to support for shared security with the least armaments, as distinct from the pursuit of narrow national interests through the accumulation and use of military hardware. Such a determination will enhance the role of the rule of law in international relations, which is so essential to the sustenance and development of our nation-State system.

Our deliberations in the First Committee this year, more than ever, should be cognizant of the Secretary-General's words of wisdom. They relate to the centrality of the competence of the United Nations in the international effort on a broad front to ensure the security of all its Member States at progressively lower levels of armament. As we move into an era of shared security through co-operation, and as the cold-war doctrines, we hope, recede into history, we must make better use of the multilateral potential of the United Nations to globalize positive developments and to respond effectively to negative developments.

Resorting to the United Nations selectively for the sole purpose of responding to events, particularly at a time of crisis, thus neglecting its preventive potential, will not be commensurate with the complexities of the global order we all hope for. The largely unfulfilled multilateral-disarmament agenda, which we

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debate annually, offers a rich storehouse for potential preventive action. Regrettably, it remains a yet-unfulfilled agenda. Our deliberations this year should therefore be responsive to this lacuna.

A revitalized role for the United Nations in preventive measures in the field of multilateral disarmament would augment the Organization's capacity to respond to all types of situations and would enhance its efficacy and prestige. We therefore expect the First Committee, at this session, to come up with forward-looking and action-oriented proposals commensurate with the disarmament potential that the new positive developments have brought about.

The recent announcements by the two major Powers concerning an agreement on conventional forces in Europe and a potential agreement on strategic nuclear weapons are welcome. We hope that these developments will provide further impetus to the process initiated with the conclusion of the agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty. We are equally hopeful that the positive climate thus created will be used to explore complementary multilateral action on nuclear issues within the United Nations framework.

Given the increasingly effective role the United Nations is playing in preserving and promoting the security of all countries, non-use of the Organization's potential in the domain of nuclear issues would be self-defeating. The recently concluded United Nations study on nuclear weapons has clearly brought out renewed concerns relating to the legal, political and environmental implications of the continued production and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, as well as of related non-proliferation issues. Clearly, multilateral action within the framework of the United Nations is called for if the

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international community is to address these concerns in their global and regional interrelationships. The need for such multilateral action has been a constant theme in the General Assembly and, more recently, in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Fourth Review Conference, which was conluded in Geneva a few weeks ago.

There are a number of areas in which multilateral action can be envisaged. One question particularly ripe for such action is the cessation of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Conditions seem to be particularly favourable for the initiation of negotiations on a multilateral instrument to this end, which would go a long way in addressing both nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation concerns. We hope that the relevant resolutions of the First Committee will envisage appropriate action involving the existing nuclear-weapon States, as well as those other States that have significant capability in nuclear technology. Such multilateral action would represent a significant confidence-building measure of a non-discriminatory character. It would also be a positive response to increasing concern about the adverse environmental consequences of the continued production and processing of raw material for nuclear weapons.

The NPT Fourth Review Conference concluded its work in Geneva a few weeks ago. Given the close relevance of the Treaty's provisions to various security and disarmament issues addressed in the First Committee, it is pertinent to make some observations in that regard. The Review Conference was unable to adopt a final declaration. Sri Lanka nevertheless considers the Fourth Review to have been a good one. It provided a constructive evaluation of the operation of the Treaty. It was able to reach agreement on several important aspects of implementation and future actions. Consensus was possible on key questions relating to safeguards and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as, to some extent, on negative security

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assurances. Even on most of the sensitive issues relating to article VI there was a wide measure of agreement, although agreement proved elusive on the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

We do not consider that the absence of an agreed final document affects the validity or the functioning of the Treaty in any way. What is clearly evident from what happened, or did not happen, at the Fourth Review Conference is that States parties have identified crucial areas for further action, such as the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

The achievement of a multilateral comprehensive test-ban Treaty is integrally related to the realization of the purposes and provisions of the NPT. The fact that some nuclear-weapon States were unable to agree to a painstakingly formulated compromise on this issue indicates that further efforts should be made to achieve this long-held priority objective. Those renewed efforts should be made at all levels and in all appropriate forums.

The forthcoming amendment Conference offers an opportunity to consider a course of action on a priority basis and in a constructive spirit. Admittedly for different reasons, all countries have attached importance to this question. In the circumstances, the opportunity offered by the amendment Conference should be exploited to find a way forward in realizing commitments undertaken in good faith in relevant Treaties. Sri Lanka looks forward to an honest appraisal of the possibilities afforded by the amendment Conference to achieve this objective. The resolutions that we adopt should be cognizant of this opportunity.

The legitimate concerns over nuclear arsenals and the traditional priority attached to that question should not deter the international community from giving adequate consideration to the issues of conventional disarmament. Sri Lanka and, indeed, many other countries have emphasized the timeliness of such action, both

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in Geneva and here in New York. We welcome the significant progress that has been made towards achieving a substantial reduction of conventional forces in Europe. We hope that this process will be continued and will be aimed at further reductions. While the European formula cannot readily be applied elsewhere, global and regional issues of conventional armaments should receive the attention of the United Nations. The fact that all wars since the Second World War have been fought with conventional weapons should be sufficient reason for the United Nations to examine ways and means of taking meaningful steps in the conventional-disarmament field.

Conflicts of varying intensity that continue within and between States often impose severe socio-economic burdens on smaller developing countries. Decidedly, these have brought into sharper forcus the priority that should be accorded to this issue. In the conventional-arms trade, commercial interests seem to have gained the upper hand, resulting in the supply of sophisticated weapons to various irregular groups.

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The acquisition of modern weapons by these groups not only threatens the stability and security of the democratically elected Governments of small nations, but also destroys their potential for economic development by terrorist activity. Arms trade without adequate monitoring or assessment by the international community can take internal disturbances to regional and international levels. The greater involvement of the United Nations to halt the present arms transfers to unrecognized and irregular groups is a question that has so far eluded assessment and evaluation, let alone solution.

The Disarmament Commission deliberations on this question should be moulded into a realistic action-oriented framework so that the United Nations can find ways and means for arresting the destabilizing effects of unconstrained arms transfers to various irregular groups. Such a course of action would augment action by the United Nations in other areas such as drug trafficking and terrorism. Many developing countries have become the victims of the mutually supportive tripartism of drug trafficking, arms smuggling and terrorism. In a larger context, international action on assessing, regulating and eventually stopping illegal arms trade would contribute immensely to the security of smaller developing countries and the maintenance of international peace and security since it would act as a constraint against the militarization of democratic systems in many of those countries.

The root cause of the majority of regional conflicts and internal disturbances is the lack of economic security for the vast number of people in developing countries. Historical facts indicate that rapid economic growth and reduction of inequalities have resulted in a greater improvement of total security than disarmament measures alone. Internal peace therefore must rest on a firm commitment to achieve common security which embraces economic security. We have not given adequate attention to the vital relationship between disarmament and

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development. To look at global and conventional security only in terms of arms reduction would be to ignore the underlying causes and symptoms that surface from time to time due to economic and social factors. It is imperative that we look at global security in terms of lowering military expenditures and arms limitations as well as establishing a relationship with economic development.

We are aware that poverty and environmental degradation are linked. But there is a growing concern about environmental pollution due to militarization. The growth of industries in the manufacture of increasingly destructive weapons and their use in internal conflicts have resulted in the displacement of populations, thus adding a third category of environmental refugees to the existing categories of political and economic refugees. The risk of using modern lethal weapons poses severe dangers to the environment which can have cumulative effects in destroying life on this planet and threaten to destroy future generations. We believe that the input the Disarmament Commission could provide would be invaluable in making preparations for the 1992 Conference on the Environment and Development, particularly in view of the existing links with disarmament.

In the field of conventional disarmament, my delegation is also holpeful that this session of the First Committee will provide decisive political input to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for the conclusion of a convention comprehensively banning chemical weapons. While the Geneva negotiations have achieved considerable technical progress this year, we share the disappointment that more could not have been achieved in terms of narrowing the differences on crucial political questions relating to the convention. We commend the skilful and dedicated chairmanship of Ambassador Hyltaneus of Sweden, who worked unceasingly to move negotiations forward. Sri Lanka has consistently supported the earliest conclusion of a non-discriminatory convention embodying a comprehensive ban on these abhorrent weapons without reservations. We also share

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the mainstream opinion that the convention and its functioning should be truly multilateral in character and that only such a conceptual framework would ensure the universality of the convention. We continue to believe that universality can best be achieved by making the convention attractive to all countries, and not by tactical means, as no country can be persuaded by force of arms to sign an internationally binding agreement.

As a developing country which values its ecosystem for its sustenance and development, we share the view that destruction of chemical weapons should be accomplished in an environmentally safe manner. Most importantly, we consider that renewed efforts should be made to conclude the convention within set time-limits, since some of the remaining political questions cannot perhaps be solved unless they are purposefully negotiated in the terminal phase of negotiations. We therefore hope that the draft resolution we adopt will provide the necessary political impetus to encourage the negotiators in Geneva to enter this decisive phase of negotiations.

As we move out of an era of cold war confrontation into an era of multilateral co-operation for the security and well-being of nations, outer space appears to be an area which could benefit immensely from this co-operative endeavour. Co-operation in outer space should not lead to the deployment of weapons, offensive or defensive, in that environment but should facilitate positive international co-operation for the benefit of mankind. Collective action for that purpose, particularly preventive measures against arms competition, has assumed greater importance as the use of outer space has become a truly multinational affair. Given the investments that continue to be made by an increasing number of countries in the use of outer space and its economic and security implications for all the countries of the world, the need to keep this last frontier for the benefit of mankind remains a matter of urgency. The evident mobility of space capability

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would indicate that it would not be prudent to wait until we hear the first cry of proliferation in order to take the first step in the direction of prevention. Preference of technological solutions to space-related security problems as distinct from diplomatic ones, could prove short-lived as was the case in many other areas of weapons technology.

The opportunity available now should therefore be utilized to take meaningful multilateral steps to prevent a destabilizing weapons endeavour in outer space. This year, we are encouraged by the qualitatively improved performance of the Ad Hoc Commmittee on Outer Space of the Conference on Disarmament. The Committee has reiterated the urgency and importance of preventing an arms race in outer space, and has developed consensus language on indicative ways for further work towards that objective. There was an agreement on the complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts and on the importance of bilateral negotiations. We therefore believe that opportunities exist to focus on elements of common interest without prejudice to the position of any delegation with regard to an eventual agreement or agreements that could be reached to achieve the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

There was also recognition of the contribution of experts and of the need for transparency in outer space activities relevant to the realization of the mandated goal of the Ad Hoc Committee. We therefore look forward to building upon these areas of common ground during consultations on a draft resolution. That would help the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament to further develop the useful work it was able to carry out this year. The Sri Lanka delegation will initiate and actively participate in our collective work on the draft resolution on outer space, on which a wide measure of support has been a tradition in this Committee.

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Finally, the responsiblity for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace should rest with all nations. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, during the two sessions held in 1990, was able to make significant progress in its preparatory work. The Committee was able to adopt a draft agenda of the Colombo Conference, which was before it for several years. The Committee, during the first reading of the draft rules of procedure of the Colombo Conference, was able to reach tentative agreement on most of the rules.

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

As indicated in General Assembly resolution 44/120, significant progress has also been made in the substantive aspect of the preparatory work of the Committee. As may be recalled, the Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries meeting in Belgrade in 1989 reminded the five permanent members of the Security Council of their responsibility to attend the Colombo Conference with a view to discussing the implementation of the Declaration on the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region. It is our hope that the international community will collectively work towards this end. Sri Lanka as the initiator of the proposals is firmly committed to the holding of the Conference in Colombo in 1991.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the next speaker, allow me to extend a warm welcome to the participants in the 1990 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. I understand that as part of their programme of studies in New York they will attend meetings of the First Committee. It is my hope that they will derive benefit from the Committee's proceedings.

Mr. PAWLAK (Poland): At the very outset I should like to express my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am convinced that your wisdom and outstanding diplomatic skills will efficiently and successfully guide the Committee through its work during this session. At the same time I wish to extend my congratulations to the other officers of this prestigious Committee.

I should like also to take this opportunity to welcome among us the representatives of the United Nations Secretariat: the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and the Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Miljan Komatina.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

Since we gathered here one year ago the whole world has witnessed developments unprecedented in its post-war history. The international community hailed the demise of the cold war and the decline of totalitarian régimes in a good part of Europe. The process of change in Central and Eastern Europe, which in fact was inspired by my country, has led to overcoming the decades-old and clear dichotomous division of the continent, laying foundations for the establishment of new, more adequate and more reliable structures and mechanisms of security and co-operation. This, in our opinion, will facilitate the process of unification of Europe. The impact of those changes has not been limited to the old continent alone. It has its own bearing on the international situation as a whole. The traditional dichotomy of East-West relations has lost its validity. Confrontation and rivalry between the super-Powers have given way to dialogue and co-operation. There is a growing recognition of the need to strengthen the rule of law in international relations. Openness and transparency in military matters are being acknowledged as significant elements enhancing security. Recent successes of the United Nations, especially those in the area of solving regional conflicts, have consolidated its role and authority, opening up at the same time new possibilities for the Organization and its organs to discharge their responsibilities as set out in the Charter.

For most of the year the natural longing of peoples for peace, enduring security and a relaxation of tension in all spheres of international relations has seemed to stand better chances of materialization than ever. However, on the morning of 2 August this year we once again realized how fragile peace was. We learned that the end of the cold war and the rapprochement between the East and the West did not eliminate automatically all threats to international peace and security in the world. We learned as well the dire urgency of eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

So far, their very existence has constituted a threat to mankind. This time the world has been confronted with the possibility of their use, especially the use of chemical weapons, on a large scale. To remove the threat of chemical-weapons proliferation and their use once and for all, it becomes imperative that we move quickly to a comprehensive and global ban. In this regard the recent Soviet-American agreement on ceasing production of chemical weapons and destroying stockpiles is a sign of hope. It should be regarded as a new expression of their political will to see those weapons of mass destruction reduced and subsequently eliminated. This important signal must be taken into account by the Conference on Disarmament when it comes to grips with a convention on the total and complete elimination of chemical weapons.

Regrettably, the outcome of this year's negotiations on the convention fell short of our expectations. In saying this we must admit that time is not our ally in that endeavour. The alarming spread of chemical weapons and the growing danger of their use in conflicts are a serious reminder of this fact. On the other hand, we are convinced that negotiations on the convention have already reached the final stage and can be successfully concluded, if only negotiating parties exert themselves. Moreover, that conviction was considerably enhanced recently during the general debate of the General Assembly when a vast majority of Member States stressed the urgency of concluding negotiations on a comprehensive, effectively verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons. The Polish delegation, in close co-operation with the delegation of Canada, will submit a draft resolution on this subject and will do its utmost to ensure that the Committee adopts it by consensus.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

Cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament remains an issue of the highest priority. While recognizing some progress in this field we are nevertheless of the opinion that it can be regarded as only a first step in the right direction and that many more efforts are needed to produce satisfying results. Poland is encouraged by the significant progress made in the negotiations at the strategic arms reduction talks (START) which would bring about significant reductions in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States. Subsequently, we look forward to the conclusion of the START treaty by the end of the year. We are also encouraged by the renewed commitment of both the United States and the Soviet Union to continue the Geneva negotiations on defensive and space weapons.

However, some urgent problems related to nuclear disarmament remain unresolved. First is the question of a ban on nuclear tests. The recent conclusion by the United States and the Soviet Union of verification protocols to the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty is welcomed and appreciated. But the propitious political climate and the significant rapprochement between the great Powers has raised justified expectations for much more radical steps in this field.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

It is therefore vital that the re-established Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear test ban of the Conference on Disarmament begin substantial negotiations on this question at its next session. The intention of the United States to participate fully in its work augurs well for the outcome of those negotiations.

In assessing nuclear issues, we cannot disregard certain encouraging developments. I am referring, in particular, to new positive trends that are becoming more and more visible in this area. We are witnessing important changes in the perception of the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines. Instead of relying on the concept of mutual assured destruction, some nuclear-weapon States are making attempts to determine the lowest level of deterrence required to meet their security concerns. Those trends offer new possibilities in our efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Thus, they have to be pursued and further developed.

Once we are able to eliminate the most deadly weapons, we must do our utmost to stop them from spreading. It is a pressing task, since for many years the world has been confronted with a growing number of States capable of manufacturing chemical weapons. Another cause of concern is that a number of States, some of them with considerable capability in the nuclear field, remain outside the non-proliferation Treaty. Needless to say, some of them are located in conflict-prone areas. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as certain conventional ones, and the means of their delivery has, without doubt, a negative impact on international peace and security. It also adds to the complexity of any arms control and disarmament negotiations. Proliferation cannot, therefore, slip out of our control. For this particular reason, we welcome the joint statement by the United States and the Soviet Union on the non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, as well as missiles capable of carrying such weapons and certain other missiles and missile technologies, as a very important step, opening up possibilities of finding a solution to this issue.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

Those remarks lead me to the recently concluded Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty. Despite the broad consensus on a wide number of issues, and despite considerable concessions made in the last hours of the Conference, it has not been possible to adopt a final document. Should we then consider the Conference a failure? In our opinion, that is not the case. In fact, significant progress was made on some important issues, such as security assurances or full-scope safeguards. And, what is also extremely important, views expressed during the Conference have confirmed the commitment of its participants to the Treaty and their wish to strengthen the non-proliferation régime. The non-proliferation Treaty remains the main instrument in reducing the nuclear threat and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. For this reason, Poland is vitally interested in maintaining its effectiveness and viability, and strongly advocates extending its operations indefinitely, beyond the year 1995.

At the same time, Poland is seriously concerned about a linkage being established between the non-proliferation Treaty and the comprehensive test-ban Treaty. If we allow this linkage to continue, every one of us may be a loser in the long run.

Europe is now engaged in removing the relics of its division and, at the same time, in searching for concepts for a new system for its security, based on different premises and adequate to the challenges we face today. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) plays a vital role in this endeavour as a well-established mechanism of co-operation between European countries with the participation of both super-Powers. In our view, a new security system should embody the concept of a single Europe and the values of democracy, pluralism and humanism. It should also contain adequate mechanisms of crisis management and conflict prevention. Disarmament should be its key element.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

The Vienna negotiations of 22 and 34 States are part and parcel of this process. Poland, which is participating actively in those negotiations, attaches particular importance to the conclusion of a treaty on conventional forces. We hope that the treaty will be signed in November this year, as scheduled. Its conclusion should not be an end in itself. To the contrary, it should be followed by a new round of negotiations on even deeper cuts and reductions of other types of weapons and equipment, as well as on a number of related measures. Those measures should, among other things, ensure the irreversibility of changes in the character of armed forces and industrial potential and in the use of resources. We also look forward to the commencement, shortly after the signing of the Agreement on conventional forces in Europe, of new negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of short-range nuclear forces.

Political changes in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the overall improvement of the international situation, have triggered off changes in the role of military alliances in Europe. The Warsaw Treaty Alliance, of which Poland is a member, has already lost its ideological character and will gradually lose its significance as the process of building up European unity proceeds. However, as long as the military alliances continue to exist, we advocate their transformation so that they acquire a non-confrontational and co-operative character. In this regard, we welcome the London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance as a very promising contribution to overcoming the legacy of decades of confrontation and to establishing the political structures of the new Europe. Poland is strongly endorsing all efforts aimed at eliminating bloc approaches in solving European problems.

Greater openness in military matters has become one of the major aims related to disarmament in the foreign policy of the Republic of Poland. We take an

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

active part in the Vienna negotiations on a new set of confidence- and security-building measures with the firm conviction that their results will increase the existing degree of openness and predictability in military activities, thus contributing further to the reduction of mistrust and to the strengthening of security in Europe.

Earlier this year, Poland, for the first time, made public its military doctrine. That doctrine is entirely defensive. It is not directed against any particular State or alliance. It is exclusively directed against any aggressor, whoever he may be. Also this year, Poland joined other States in reporting to the Secretary-General its military expenditures in standardized form. We intend to continue submitting such reports on a regular basis.

In addition, the Polish Ministry of National Defence issued a publication, "Polish Army - Facts and Figures", containing detailed data on the size and structure of our armed forces. The publication was distributed, among others, at the Vienna seminar on military doctrines.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

This year has been rich in developments of crucial importance to questions related to arms control and disarmament and to international security in general. So the task before us is extremely serious and truly demanding. We must carefully assess the situation and make an attempt to translate it into the language of implementable resolutions. This requires not only that progress be recorded on issues under our consideration, but also, what is more important, that recommendations be elaborated that will guide our efforts in the field of disarmament for the next year. My delegation is ready to make a meaningful contribution to this end in co-operation with all other interested delegations.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): I am pleased to convey to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of the Nigerian delegation on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. Judging from your significant contributions in the Security Council and recently during the last session of the Disarmament Commission as Chairman of the working group that successfully concluded the agenda item on South Africa's nuclear capability, my delegation is confident that this year's session of the First Committee is under most competent leadership. Our congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee. I take this opportunity also to welcome the United Nations Fellows who are with us this morning.

Since the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the international political climate has generally continued to improve. The events of the past 10 months, in particular in East-West relations, bear this out. Old ideological barriers and rivalries are giving way to momentous developments with profound impact on international relations. Between the two super-Powers there is a predisposition and political will to negotiate deep reductions in the stockpiles of conventional and nuclear weapons, as well as to seek the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

In Eastern Europe the dismantling of the Berlin Wall has crystallized into democratic revolutions, which recently culminated in the unification of Germany. In Africa, Namibia has at last attained sovereign independence, thanks to the determined efforts of the United Nations. In the Middle East, the two Yemens have voluntarily reunited into a single nation.

Equally important are the statements and conduct of statesmen, which help to fashion and create perceptions of global peace and security. In this regard, the Nigerian delegation congratulates President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union on the occasion of his being awarded the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize. It is our hope that that award will be an incentive to all statesmen and consequently help in the promotion of international peace and security.

In spite of these positive developments, lasting peace and security are still proving to be a mirage. Hotbeds of tension, while subsiding in some regions of the world, are emerging in others with potentially more disastrous consequences for international peace and security. They are rapidly undermining the very limited gains that have been achieved in the sphere of disarmament. In a period that holds so much promise for international co-operation, the contemporary crisis and conflict in the Persian Gulf is regrettable; so are the situations in the Middle East, the unresolved issue of the Korean peninsula, the lingering problems in Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Central America and Liberia, among others. In varying degrees they all have a direct bearing on questions of international peace and security, as well as on the tempo of our work in this Committee.

We are particularly saddened by events in Liberia, where thousands have died since December 1989. Ironically, as serious as that situation is, the world seems to have forgotten the Liberians or abandoned them to their fate. Unless we are to believe that Liberia is being forgotten because it is not deemed to be of strategic value to the great Powers, the international community must interest itself in the

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

speedy termination of the civil war now raging there. We cannot and must not be selective in our emphasis on the resolution of conflicts and pursuit of peace and security.

Apart from these military threats, the questions of non-military threats to peace and security, at both the global and military levels, are increasingly acquiring greater recognition and urgency of action on virtually the same scale as military disarmament, for there can be no effective and genuine global disarmament unless it is founded on socio-economic and environmental development at national, regional and global levels. Indeed, disarmament, relaxation of international tension or super-Power entente cannot be meaningful to those dying of hunger and malnutrition or living in abject poverty.

In our interdependent world, disarmament cannot be restricted to the immediate preservation of life, but should also embrace the interrelationship between disarmament and development. Although recent developments in disarmament negotiations gave us ground for hope, that hope has not been justified and expectations from the "peace dividend" are rapidly receding. In other words, attention must not only be focused on military threats which constitute impediments to the realization of peace and security, but also on sustained global economic development, the promotion of social justice and the protection of the environment.

The failure of the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in Geneva last month is an eloquent reminder of the need to temper our euphoria over international political developments with a realistic assessment of the need to utilize decisively the unique opportunity presented by those positive changes in favour of lasting peace and security.

The non-proliferation Treaty, which has served as the most important multilateral disarmament instrument limiting the spread of nuclear weapons in our

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

age, has not been able to prevent vertical proliferation or halt the refinement of nuclear weapons. The Review Conference achieved agreement on many issues, but failed primarily because of its inability to reach consensus on the question of a comprehensive test ban.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

My delegation does not wish to perform a post-mortem of the Fourth Review Conference. However, we cannot fail to underline the need for us to reflect on its potentially damaging impact on the 1995 extension Conference. It is a situation that calls for a rededication to the purposes of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament. Above all, it demands a reassessment of the positions of those still opposed to an early test-ban treaty.

My delegation is delighted to note that by its outstanding achievement at its May 1990 session the United Nations Disarmament Commission has justified the renewed confidence in it, which was expressed by the initiative at rationalization the First Committee took in resolution 44/119 C. Since its establishment in 1978 the Disarmament Commission's landmark achievement has been its ability to arrive at a consensus on four of the items on its agenda, namely, South Africa's nuclear capability, the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, conventional disarmament and the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. We can only hope that there will be an increasingly effective utilization of the Disarmament Commission's vital functions as a major deliberative and recommendatory forum on key disarmament questions for the General Assembly.

Conversely, however, the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva has continued to atrophy and has been prevented from a true discharge of its mandate as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. Apart from the negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention, now at an advanced stage, negotiations on other issues have been prevented by lack of consensus. Indeed, the lack of consensus has been virtually transformed into a sort of veto by some delegations, inhibiting negotiations on particular items. Although a non-negotiating Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban was re-established late in the summer session, after a 7-year hiatus, the Conference was unable to agree on its early re-establishment next year. Unlike the other Ad Hoc Committees, the fate of that Ad Hoc Committee is

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

thus uncertain. Nevertheless, the nuclear-test ban remains the top-most priority item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Unless the Conference is made to overcome this problem it will continue to be bogged down in inaction and paralysis. The pursuits of the objective of a comprehensive test-ban treaty through the amendment Conference and of the issue of negative security assurances through the Fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty illustrates the unhappy state of affairs in the Conference on Disarmament and the fact that the consequent pursuit of these initiatives is taking place in other forums outside the Conference on Disarmament. This unfortunate manifestation of loss of faith, should it persist, could only detract from the eventual effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body.

The international community has been awaiting the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. The negotiations, which have spanned more than two decades, have reached a critical stage in which political will, more than technical breakthroughs, will now be needed to bring them to a successful end. In this regard my delegation notes with regret that, despite the tremendous efforts exerted by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, the momentum that characterized the negotiations last year was not sustained at the 1990 session of the Conference on Disarmament. In particular some new, divisive elements were introduced into the negotiations, and these could have serious consequences not only for the future work of the Committee but for the Convention itself.

My delegation regards the situation as ominous, and we therefore appeal to all States involved in the negotiations to demonstrate the requisite spirit of co-operation and flexibility, which is absolutely essential for progress in the

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

negotiations. The threat that such weapons pose to international peace and security is very real and next in magnitude to the threat posed by nuclear weapons. The sooner the convention is concluded, the better it will be for us all. The First Committee should therefore express itself very clearly on the need to conclude the negotiations at the earliest possible date.

In a nutshell, Nigeria calls upon the First Committee, as the foremost beacon in the disarmament field, to take bold steps at this session to come up with radical solutions to the questions of nuclear disarmament. We have emphasized on numerous occasions that the central issue of greatest significance to any genuine curtailment of nuclear proliferation in its vertical, horizontal and qualitative dimensions is the immediate conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It is at the core of the entire nuclear-disarmament agenda. That is why Nigeria fully supports the aims and objectives of the amendment Conference scheduled for January 1991.

It is our expectation that Member States will translate the failure and lessons of the Fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty into success at the amendment Conference. It is needless to warn against the grave world consequences for the nuclear-non-proliferation régime that would result from a failure to achieve a comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests at an early date. We dare not imagine what would happen to the Pandora's box of trends towards proliferation in various parts of the world, all itching to be let loose, if nuclear proliferation is not immediately prohibited at the global level. We call upon the nuclear Powers, and particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, to demonstrate the necessary political will to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1991.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

The question of the denuclearization of Africa naturally fits into the equation of global efforts at nuclear disarmament through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world as bulwarks against proliferation. We in Africa are closely watching the turn of events in South Africa, which has consistently frustrated the realization of the denuclearization of Africa since the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa made by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its 1964 summit meeting at Cairo. We commend the recommendations of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on the question of South Africa's nuclear capability and its impact on the peace and security of African States.

The call upon South Africa to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards constitutes a correct approach. We are also gratified by the request to the Secretary-General to assist the African States in any possible to way to advance the full realization of the OAU Declaration and of General Assembly resolution 2033 (XX) of 3 December 1965, which endorsed it.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

Furthermore, the recommendation of the Disarmament Commission that the Secretary-General follow more closely South Africa's evolution in the nuclear field and report regularly to the General Assembly complements the efforts of the First Committee as manifested by General Assembly resolution 44/113 A and B, adopted on 15 December 1989. We believe that the Secretary-General's report to be prepared by a group of experts, expected to be issued shortly for the consideration of our Committee, on the military assistance that apartheid South Africa is receiving from Israel and other sources in advanced missile technology, will throw greater light on the present status of South Africa's nuclear weapons acquisition vis-à-vis the denuclearization of Africa. At the appropriate time, Nigeria, in concert with other African States, will address this question and introduce relevant draft resolutions in light of these developments since 1989, as well as the recommendations of the Disarmament Commission and the Secretary-General's report.

Conventional disarmament must also continue to be resolutely pursued within the context of overall global disarmament, as conventional weapons have been used in nearly 200 armed conflicts in the developing countries since 1945, with over 20 million people killed and materials worth billions of dollars destroyed. To facilitate conventional disarmament, especially at both regional and global levels, the roots of conflict and the resort to conventional armaments must be properly identified and eliminated. In this regard, Nigeria calls upon the international community to ensure that conventional arms reduction in Europe does not translate into the dumping of unwanted or freed stockpiles of conventional weapons into African and other developing countries, with the effect of securing peace and security in the North while exporting the seeds of tension and conflagration to the South.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

My delegation wishes to place on record our satisfaction with the activities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, especially over the past year, under the able guidance of Mr. Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. The regional seminar held in Arusha, Tanzania, in March 1990 on Crisis Prevention and Conflict Resolution in Africa was an important contribution to confidence-building measures and the enhancement of security in our region. We look forward to similar activities in 1991 in conjunction with those of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. We also commend the Department's contributions as highlighted in Mr. Akashi's statement to this Committee last Monday. We note with satisfaction from his statement that this year's Disarmament Fellowship Programme "invited associate fellows from the two parts of Korea as a contribution to the relaxation of tension in North-East Asia". (A/C.1/45/PV.3, p. 66)

In conclusion, I shall draw from some elements contained in this year's Disarmament Commission consensus draft Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade - and my delegation had the honour to chair in May the Working Group on the Declaration - which will come before the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly for adoption. They are, first, that the international community must stimulate and deepen awareness of the common interests of our global society and of our universal desire to achieve disarmament and strengthen international peace and security. Secondly, the challenges facing the international community today are enormous and require the political will of States to solve these difficult and complex issues. Thirdly, bilateral and regional disarmament efforts can only be complementary and mutually supportive, but should not replace or substitute multilateral co-operation for disarmament under the United Nations umbrella. Lastly, the roles of an informed public and education in the promotion of international peace and security should be encouraged and promoted.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

It is the task of the First Committee at this session to erect those and other pillars of enduring peace and security if the new international order envisaged is to be realized in the 1990s and beyond.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.